

Thawing cold cases

Several slayings on SFPD hot list are in District 6

BY TOM CARTER

THE murder of a 9-year girl in her Tenderloin apartment building is among several cold cases in District 6 that homicide Inspector Joseph Toomey and his partner are investigating, Toomey told those assembled at the Tenderloin police captain's meeting Feb. 26.

The crime occurred nearly 24 year ago in the five-story apartment building at 765 O'Farrell St. DNA is expected to play a major role, if the special investigative unit created a year ago is to solve the case.

On April 10, 1984, Mei Leung and her 8-year-old brother, Mike, were returning home. As they got close to the building's steps Mei dropped a dollar bill. Police believe the bill blew under a door to the basement or somewhere inside the building.

Mei told her brother she was going into the basement and would

look for the bill near the elevator. Mike took the elevator upstairs alone and went inside the family's apartment but didn't say anything to his mother. It was nearly 15 minutes before she noticed Mei was not around.

Mike went to the basement and found his sister

dead, hanging over a water pipe naked and bloody. Police believe she was sexually assaulted, stabbed and strangled.

Toomey and his partner Inspector Holly Pera work out of the Hall of Justice, relying heavily on lab work and a statewide DNA identification bank in Sacramento. Most felons arrested in California in the last two years have their DNA on file. DNA has been used in court more effectively than fingerprints since the 1990s, but Toomey said fingerprint technology has greatly advanced, too. Bloody prints on a wall were always easy to take. But now, a chemical spray can pop up invisible prints.

The team recently solved a 36-year-old case with the murder conviction of John Puckett, 74, a repeat sex offender, guilty of assaulting and stabbing to death a 22-year-old UCSF nurse in her Sunset District flat. Puckett had DNA on file from previous sex-offender convictions. He was arrested in Stockton after a match with DNA that had been worked out of evidence preserved from the old crime scene.

What resurrects a cold case is new evidence or other new interest. Sometimes, as the Mei Leung case was with Pera, it's a poignant memory. "I pulled the Mei Leung case because I remembered it from my days as a patrol officer when I was at Northern Station," Pera later told The Extra. "I thought it was worth looking at."

There were sufficient fluids from the crime scene for the lab to exam-

"People don't realize what impact a murder has on a family."

Holly Pera
SFPD COLD CASE UNIT

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P.O.,
WE WON'T
GO

Residents
protest for full
post office

PAGE 2



PLUSH
MYSTERY
SOLVED

Stuffed
animals' lives
find meaning

PAGE 4

DISTRICT 6
DRUG CASES
SOARING

Grim stories
told at TL
Safety Forum

PAGE 8

CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO



ORIGINAL JOE'S

PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Frank, owner and night bartender at the 21 Club near Original Joe's, sorely misses the restaurant and like so many in the neighborhood, hopes it will reopen.

Hole in the 'hood

Tenderloin's not the same without Joe's

BY TOM CARTER

EARLY on a miserably cold and wet night in January, Frank, owner and night bartender at the grungy 21 Club in the middle of the Tenderloin, is doing a brisk business. Bundled-up customers fill every bar stool. They coddle their beers in the dim

light. The smell of old booze and damp clothes hangs in the sweet and sour air. The bar's colored advertising lights wink like a miniature carnival. Jimmy Buffett's nostalgic tequila anthem, "Margaritaville," wafts from the jukebox.

"I just wish Marie would open up," Frank says, pausing at the end of the bar in a reference to Marie Duggan, the co-owner of Original Joe's restaurant. "But I think she's still fighting the insurance company."

Duggan is co-owner with husband, John, of the iconic, 70-year-old restaurant up the block on Taylor Street. Some of the restaurant's 70 employees favored nightcaps at Frank's bar.

The 21 Club is itself a Tenderloin landmark, as close to an artists' bar as you'll find in the neighborhood. And everybody who's been there knows Frank, but they don't all know his last name. And he wants to keep it that way. So you'll see a picture of him on our front page, but you'll have to kneecap us to get us to cough up his last name.

But nightcaps and all other routines to and from O.J.'s ended abruptly on that dark Oct. 12 when a \$2 million fire started in the kitchen flue. It set off sprinklers upstairs in the Moderne Hotel and water showered down through the ceiling. Waiters, cooks, busboys, porters and cashiers fled across Taylor Street where they huddled in the rain and watched the billowing smoke and heard the sickening crunch of Fire Department axes. When the fire was out and the firefighters gone, the restaurant and kitchen lay in soggy ruin.

The Tenderloin has reeled ever since from that hit in its solar plexus. Not just



Original Joe's has been closed since a kitchen fire Oct. 12.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

GOOD NEWS for...

BOEDEKER PARK Friends of Boeddeker Park has long wanted a bulletin board for the front gate. Now the park will get it. The Friends received a \$5,000 Community Challenge Grant from the city and within six months the 4-foot by 4-foot bulletin board will go up outside on the fence near the Jones and Eddy streets gate. And it will be special. Metal sculptor Amy Blackstone will create an ornate steel border around it. She will unveil her design at the Friends' March 13 meeting in the clubhouse. Blackstone has created sculptures at Helen Wills Playground on Russian Hill and in Kid Power Park in the Mission. "I tried to get a Tenderloin artist but the one I called recommended Amy and so did Rec and Park," Friends' Chair Betty Traynor said. "I had her in mind myself." Community announcements and other material will be approved by park Director Al Wimberly.

TAX FILERS Families that earn \$42,000 or less can get their 2007 taxes prepared for free at eight central city sites, and may find they're eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which could put up to \$4,700 back in their pockets. Earn It! Keep It! Save It!, a United Way-led coalition of 230 community organizations, foundations, government agencies, churches and financial institutions in seven counties, sponsors 39 sites in the city and many more throughout the region. Last year, the program helped almost 23,000 Bay Area families get back \$23.9 million in tax refunds. Dial 211 to find the nearest site or go to earnitkeepitsaveit.org.

GREEN STREETS In November, good citizens John Nulty and David Baker surveyed the TL, came up with a list of eight street trees damaged by accident or vandalism, and sent the list to DPW and other city agencies responsible for greening the city. Some trees were still saplings, planted during the mayor's 2006 greening initiative. Early this year, DPW's Bureau of Urban Forestry was out replacing not only the trees on the list but three others that were looking peaked. Celebrate spring and the new trees at 424 Jones, 450 Jones, 318 Leavenworth, 222 Hyde, 623 Ellis, 741 Ellis, 795 Geary and two each at 430 Hyde and 308 Eddy. The community thanks DPW for its quick work.

THE TENDERLOIN Four boys on the MacCanDo Tenderloin Youth Track Team have qualified to compete July 11-15 in the 42nd International Children's Games, which are expected to draw 2,000 athletes ages 12 to 15 from 60 countries. Qualifying in three track and field events each at Kezar Stadium on Feb. 10 were Simon Xie, David Ngyuen and Aaron Lam, all 14, and Tony Lau, 12. Kezar, where the MacCanDo team practices weekly, will host the track competition. At the first of the year, when coach and Rec and Park Co-director Rob McDaniels was reassigned, he moved his team recruiting base from Boeddeker Park to Tenderloin Children's Playground a block away. "And these four just popped up," McDaniels said. "It's their first year on the team." He predicted Aaron Lam, who lives on Eddy Street, would do well. "He's a power runner and very inspired," McDaniels said. "He runs the 400 meters like Edwin Moses. Well, I shouldn't jump to comparisons." In various combinations, the boys qualified in 100-, 400-, 800- and 1,500-meter categories, and in the shot put, high jump and long jump.

If you have some good news, send it to marjorie@studycenter.org or tom@studycenter.org.

Residents rally, but outlook bleak, for full service Tenderloin post office

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

THE Tenderloin's post office at Golden Gate Avenue and Hyde Street has been going downhill steadily for some time now, and despite community efforts to clean it up and save services, improvements are likely to be a long time coming — if ever.

It has to make money to justify improvement, U.S. Postal Service public affairs rep James Wigdel told *The Extra*.

Wigdel was one of 13 people who met for an hour Feb. 25 in Supervisor Chris Daly's office to powwow on the fate of the Hyde and Golden Gate site, whose lease is up next year. It opened in 1991, after the '89 quake closed the 7th and Mission post office.

Community members and the Tenderloin police say it's a haven, inside and out, for drug-dealing, gang activity and loitering, and has so few postal services that customers are staying away. The stamp machine doesn't work, drop boxes for outgoing mail were removed two months ago and box holders can't pick up their mail after 5:30 p.m. Until a year ago, the building was open two nights a week until 8:30 p.m. Forty percent of the facility's 7,000 boxes are unrented, Wigdel said.

The Feb. 25 meeting was part of community activists' effort to get the USPS to convert 101 Hyde into a full-service postal facility. It started late last year when a coalition of groups — Hastings Law School, The New Tenderloin, Tenderloin Housing Clinic, Alliance for a Better District 6, Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, Chinatown Community Development Center, the YMCA, the Safety Network and the North of Market Community Benefit District — launched a petition drive calling for the conversion.

At the meeting, the coalition handed over its petition with 1,000 signatures to Winnie Groux, USPS district manager for San Francisco. The accompanying letter was cc'd to Rep. Nancy Pelosi and Postmaster General Jack Potter. In addition to Groux and Wigdel, TL police Capt. Gary Jimenez and Hastings CFO David Seward attended.

Seward asked the Postal Service reps to look for "sustainable solutions" to the community's concerns. Daly, who called the Feb. 14 Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee hearing on converting 101 Hyde to full service, asked the Postal Service to be a better neighbor. As things are now, Daly said, the post office is contributing to the "ghettoization" of the neighborhood. The Examiner reported that Capt. Jimenez called 101 Hyde "pretty much an abandoned property" and said his officers are "constantly chasing drug dealers out of the place."

According to Alliance for a Better District 6 Executive Director Michael Nulty, who attended the meeting, Groux also is concerned about safety. She said employees at the site



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Tenderloin activists rally in front of the 101 Hyde St. post office that has been cutting services.

have been assaulted, one just the previous week.

Eight postal facilities are within a mile of 101 Hyde, Wigdel told the group. Three are in the Tenderloin, including a small full-service site in the basement of the old Federal Building on Golden Gate and Fox Plaza.

The Postal Service has good reason to look hard at all three right now. The 101 Hyde lease comes due next year, and the old Federal Building site — you need to go through heavy, heavy security to get stamps — is up for consolidation as offices move into the new building on Seventh Street.

And the Fox Plaza site is on the chopping block and could be gone in a year or two. Owners Archstone-Smith filed in December to demolish the two-story building that houses the postal facility and build a 250-unit market-rate apartment building.

"Fox Plaza is one of the busiest post offices in the entire city," Wigdel told *The Extra*. He thinks that's good news for the Tenderloin because when USPS

evaluates its financial options, it's going to go where the business is.

"Community input is important to us," he said. "At the meeting, neighborhood people gave us things to think about as we go forward, like the information about growth in the area. Area growth means growth for us. We're mandated by law to make money."

Wigdel said the next step will be to turn over all the information about options to a Postal Service facilities group — "our real estate and building experts" — and reconvene the Tenderloin group again in about a month.

The day after the meeting, North of Market Community Benefit District Manager Elaine Zamora emailed community supporters of a full-service post office: "I believe we are making some progress . . . [At the meeting] we noted that . . . it is the added eyes and ears of the customers who would frequent a full-service post office that would bring security to the site. This was not something that had occurred to [USPS officials]." ■



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Tenderloin without Joe's: 'There's a void in my life'

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

neighborhood dwellers and fellow city citizens but other-county Baysiders and tourist converts, too, lost their prime Wild West, Italian haunt. Moreover, from the theaters to nearby mom-and-pops, Original Joe's was good for everyone's business.

A sign outside the front door on 144 Taylor St. says: "Closed due to fire, opening soon." But five months later, rumors question whether Joe's will ever rise from its ashes.

"Yeah, I miss Joe's," says a worn, older man on Frank's end stool. The bleary-eyed woman next to him leans in, echoes the sentiment, then confides, "They make a lot of money, you know."

Historically, the skids famously met the old-timey middle class and sometimes celebrities at Original Joe's. And whether you had half a heat on or not, it was a pleasant step up to equality.

"A lot of people come from out of town, too, and drink here first, then go eat at Joe's," says Frank, who frequents Joe's himself. "Now (my) business is off. People who came to town before New Year's were real disappointed." Frank says his business is down less than 10%.

It's a shame, too, he adds, that street people hang around O.J.'s and piss on the sidewalk.

Around the corner at EXIT Theater on Eddy Street, manager Richard Livingston feels the loss as much as anyone. The restaurant's back room served as EXIT's cabaret and stage for its Diva Festival each April and the S.F. Fringe Festival in September. The Fringe put on 18 performances and held its opening and closing night parties at Original Joe's.

"It's a tragedy, a tremendous loss," Livingston says. "Our performers and audiences go there before and after shows."

"People come to the Tenderloin for several things in their evening. Now, they are less likely to stick around the neighborhood."

Besides offering the city's best \$6 Manhattan and finest bacon platter, says actor Sean Owens, who recently starred at the EXIT, O.J.'s has been the go-to spot for actors from all over the world during the Fringe Festival where cast celebrations abound.

"The bar stools have birthed countless play concepts for me personally, and the booths have been the scene of everything from last-minute rehearsals and direction to impassioned diatribes on the nature of art," Owens says.

Losing the cabaret room where the Fringe and Diva Fests cooked in an "informal but professional" milieu is unthinkable, he says. The staff treated artists like extended family and served affordable meals while original songs, monologues and dialogues filled the air. It was "magic" that can't be replaced, Owens says.

Since 1937, and the days of its sawdust-covered floors, the restaurant served man-size portions of Italian food and steaks and chops. Like a scene from central casting, aging, tuxedoed waiters with accents strolled among the burgundy Naugahyde booths, serving patrons ranging from governors and mayors to drifters and chippies.

"We have everyone from the head politician to the head prostitute in here and we love them," the restaurant's John Duggan told the Chronicle the day of the fire. "But the person who really made us Original Joe's is the common man."

"It was so egalitarian," Livingston continues, "open to everybody, casual or formal and it crossed age and class. There's no substitute — nothing fills that need."

For years David Seward, CFO of Hastings Law College on McAllister Street, has walked the four blocks to the restaurant with groups or to eat alone at the counter and pore over his newspaper. It's so familiar that he knows Thursday is corned beef and cabbage day.

"You don't realize how important something is until it's gone," Seward said in an interview. "The food is good and solid. I was just thinking of Joe's yesterday and the prime rib. But it was more than a restaurant. You always saw somebody you knew. And it was so democratic, small d. It felt like a large family. There's a void in my life."

Last September, the month before the fire, friends from New Orleans visited Joe D'Alessandro, president of the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"The first place they wanted to go for lunch when they got off the plane was Joe's," D'Alessandro said. "And of course we market all parts of San Francisco. I think its closing has upset the regulars and beyond. There's quite a disparity of people."

People even hold the community feeling in higher regard than the food, though there's no hav-

ing one without the other.

Across the street from O.J.'s, at TNDC headquarters, Senior Project engineer Nick Griffin is one of scores of employees feeling deprived.

"If it was permanently closed, it would be a real shame and a big deal," Griffin says. "I liked the ambiance, the community, just the culture of the place. It's a venerable institution. It would sadden me if it went out of business."

Kevin Westlye, executive director of the Golden Gate Restaurant Association, couldn't recall a big restaurant being closed more than a few days in the last 20 years.

But The Extra found that a kitchen fire closed Mecca at 2029 Market St. five months last year. "Most of our 30 employees came back after drawing unemployment," says co-manager Josh Pearson.

O.J.'s employees scurried for other employment or unemployment checks. But they might find it hard to match their tips, Westlye said. O.J.'s has had its share of big tippers, the late Jerry Garcia among them.

"I know they are moving toward reopening," Westlye said. But from a conversation he said he had with Frank Duggan, he had no more details. Efforts to reach the Duggans failed. For two weeks wire-protected industrial lights have been hanging from the restaurant ceiling.

A short block and a half from O.J.'s, at the Bijou Hotel on Mason, receptionist Jill Schultze says she recommended Joe's for years and will continue when it reopens.

"When I was a concierge at the Sir Francis Drake I'd recommend it only to people who wanted to see the old San Francisco," she said from behind the Bijou desk where she's worked since October. "They worried about the homeless, though. People here are more adventurous and I'll be recommending it when the restaurant opens."

"It's got that old-school, Tenderloin feel and the Italian waiters are great. It's a good place to take your parents — like an oasis."

"Sure, its closing adversely affects the neighborhood," Tenderloin police Capt. Gary Jimenez says from his office. The Duggans donated a pair of dinners as door prizes for the monthly community forum at the police station. "Original Joe's complemented Golden Gate Theater. They were a dual attraction. People walked up the street for a traditional San Francisco meal. Of course the theater hasn't been open for a while."

Hundreds of Bay Area residents who came to Golden Gate Theater productions made a beeline to Joe's. And thousands over the years have chased the old city image.

"Legally Blonde" was its last production, in

February 2007.

Now, a no-loitering sign is up in Joe's doorway. Vagrants idle there anyway. Jimenez says when he drives by and sees them he stops, gets out and asks them to move along.

Across Taylor Street, drug trafficking has increased, Jimenez said. The previous day police busted two women selling drugs across the street near Chop It Up, an oxymoronic beauty salon and barbershop. "For one of them," Jimenez says, "it was the fourth arrest for drugs in that same block in the last three months. The mayor wants that block cleaned up."

(The cleanup occurred several days after Jimenez's remarks. In a follow-up interview, the captain said the Duggans had complained to the police and mayor's office about drug activity across the street. TNDC, which owns the barbershop building, was concerned as well. In mid-February, plainclothes cops moved in. "They made some lucky buys and made five or six solid arrests," Jimenez said. The Knock Out Posse from the Western Addition

was operating in the TL, he said. The Chop It Up owner has agreed to close. "The Duggans' main concerns over reopening were the drug traffic and a good insurance adjustment," Jimenez said.)

On the street 30 minutes later three cops put two dope-dealing suspects in handcuffs in Joe's north doorway alcove. The suspects, a man and a woman, sat on the sidewalk cross-legged, their backs against the restaurant wall. Across the street 10 people milled in front of Chop It Up.

At the corner, Swinder Multani, owner of Daldas grocery on the corner of Taylor and Eddy, lingers in the back of the store and thoughtfully calculates his loss.

"Joe's brought people to the neighborhood from all over the city," he says. "They'd buy quick stuff here, cigarettes, gum, beer. Maybe \$30 a day I averaged losing. I dunno, it's been winter and raining. Could be more."

A block and a half away, the spacious, finely appointed Hilton Hotel lobby is abuzz with guests checking in. A trio of young, big-bellied men in T-shirts, khaki shorts and flipflops are first in line. At the west end, Ken Muse, one of four employees working the concierge desk, rolls his eyes. "Oh," he says, "we all miss Joe's." The lady co-worker next to him working a computer nods vigorously without looking up.

Muse dials a number and hands over the phone. Debbie Larkin, Hilton spokeswoman, is on the line.

"The hotel regularly refers guests to Joe's for traditional San Francisco dining — on the order of Tadich's," Larkin says, then adds, "Joe's is a giant. It's like an ancient tree in the neighborhood." ■



PHOTO BY LAURIE GALLANT

Sean Owens, who starred in *Diva Fest* shows in *Original Joe's* cabaret room, says each production there was "magic."



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMUJO

Swinder Multani, whose *Daldas* grocery is up the block and across the street from *Joe's*, says the restaurant's customers would spend maybe \$30 a day at his store.

STUFFED ANIMALS – A photo p

PHOTOS AND TEXT

THIS is just another day in San Francisco where since the '80s, there has been a growing stuffed animal problem. Due to the development of sophisticated video games, computers, and robotic toys that offer a wide variety of stimulation to the old as well as the young, stuffed animals have found themselves becoming increasingly passé.

So many were manufactured during the stuffed animal boom in the 20th century, that thousands of stuffed animal baby boomers now find themselves discarded, homeless, and forced to sit on street corners plying their trade by appearing desperately cute. A few find homes where they comfort those individuals not yet adapted to modern technology and who are still easily amused by artifacts from the past. But many end their lives in recycling centers, garbage compactors, dumps, or, in a worse case scenario, are held captive by individuals with bizarre and exotic sexual fetishes.

As yet, there are no organizations whose purpose is to advocate for the rights of stuffed animals and protect them from the obsolescence that forces them to the streets. Despite that in the past they served as loyal and uncritical companions of children, lonely men and women, senile alcoholics and drug addicts, career criminals, wastrels, eccentric geniuses, sexual psychopaths, movie stars, knuckle-dragging idiots, saints, sinners, garage mechanics, Pulitzer Prize-winning novelists, bartenders, prize fighters, dictators, yogis and veterinarians, they are shoved to the side like a trophy wife who committed the unforgivable: the sin of growing old and ugly.

Bessie Smith once sang a song stating "...you've been a good old wagon, honey, but you done broke down..." and it would not surprise me in the least if, having rearranged her brain cells the previous night in a radical manner by imbibing a bit too much gin, she was suffering from a momentary bout of clairvoyance that resulted in her channeling the words of a song that predicted precisely the fate of stuffed animals in the 21st century. Not that Ms. Smith cared. She was having far too many problems with real men to be able to sympathize with Teddy Bears and Bunnies, but such are the accidents of great art.

Now I would like to draw the reader's attention to the photographs.



Exhibit One: A pile of plush animals is found abandoned on a Tenderloin street.



Exhibit Two: Spending time among stuffed animals.

EXHIBIT ONE

My friend Veronica Faraday is sitting on covered while she was delivering newspaper. These creatures are distinguished by their the average stuffed animal a child would have is because they suffer from the condition known as Stuffed Animal Inflation, a terminal malady caused by the psychological stress of realizing that they are to be terminally ignored. As they realize that they are to be terminally ignored, more people will pay attention to them, and they become bodies of themselves. After that they are no longer in contact with them by a child could lead to asphyxiation. It occurs a downward spiral where only sexual gratification the thrill is gone and they are kicked out onto the streets for themselves.

At the left side of this photograph a gentleman witnesses that such misery that he is witnessing could be the fate of so many abandoned, bloated, previously adored stuffed animals. He doubts wondering whether there truly is any meaning to an existential crisis of faith.

EXHIBIT TWO

Desperation and despair go hand in hand, and stuffed animals are known to get aggressive upon close contact. Veronica Faraday found this fact out the hard way. After seeing creatures suffering from Stuffed Animal Inflation being held by one who appears to be a cross between a child and a man, the scene only goes to show that there is nothing

Tenderloin benefit district bringing big m

A NEW wall mural is coming to the Tenderloin this summer. It promises to be the eye-catching equal of the sprawling, 340-foot-long bicycle adventure on the wall behind Safeway near the Muni tunnel at Duboce and Church streets.

Swiss artist Mona Caron did that one and has been contracted by the Tenderloin/North of Market CBD to paint a mural on the white, two-story building on the northeast corner of Golden Gate Avenue and Jones Street.

The mural will go on the west wall on Jones under the fire escape, said CBD Manager Elaine Zamora who pushed for the project. K&P Sewing Co. operates on

the ground floor where workers can be seen at their machines through the open door at the corner. At the building's east end is a sign over another door for Five Fortunes Sewing Co. The 86-98 Golden Gate Ave. building housed the X-rated Mini Adult Theater before the Jack Sen Benevolent Association bought the 1918 structure in 2001.

The mural is made possible by a \$53,750 Community Challenge grant from the city administrator's office. Each year, businesses can direct 1% of their city taxes to neighborhood improvement projects. Scores of art projects are funded this way. A 1991

voter-passed initiative created the option and set an annual cap of \$1 million.

A \$10,000 City Operations CBD grant received last year will sweeten Caron's budget, Zamora said.

"The artist is now working on a two-wall project in Noe Valley for the Farmers' Market on 24th Street," Zamora said. "I expect she'll get started here in early summer."

There are no sketches available and Caron will create the work as she goes along, as is her style, Zamora said.

"I consider her world renowned," Zamora said.

boom on the finding of found art

BY ED BOWERS



...s can have an effect on them — and on you.

the street in a pile of stuffed animals we dis-
 sers for the newspaper I work for as an art crit-
 size that is approximately 10 times larger than
 re played with in the 1950s or even '60s. This
 own as Stuffed Animal Inflation, a psycho-phys-
 ss many of them experience when they final-
 red. Naively hoping that if they increase their
 they turn themselves into grotesquely cute par-
 longer fit for the cradle because intimate con-
 nyxiation. After Stuffed Animal Inflation there
 y eccentric individuals will toy with them until
 to the street like a common prostitute to fend

eman is standing stock still in utter amazement
 ever exist in a rational universe. The sight of
 red creatures leaves him speechless. He is no
 justice in the human world and experiencing

and some homeless stuffed animals have been
 ct with members of the human species. Ms.
 r sitting down with a tribe of homeless stuffed
 ion, upon rising to her feet she was clung to
 cartoon character, a lizard, and a snake. This
 more pathetic and desperate than a cute loser.

EXHIBIT THREE

Now this is the money shot here. Ms. Faraday, having weeded out from the bunch two truly evil stuffed animals, both of whom deserve to be out on the street, is performing an occult exorcism upon them.

Notice the oval light over the evil stuffed octopus' head. All the evil is being sucked out of him in broad daylight as he bows in resignation, shame, and surrender.

Under Ms. Faraday's left arm, a giant, demonic stuffed lobster waits its turn to be exorcised.

I love it when the spirit world channels itself through my camera. At the time of this event my feet hurt and I wanted a drink more than I desired to breathe so my mind was suitably empty enough to be able to take this shot and get one hell of a good look into the workings of the invisible world.

If I play my cards right by publicizing this photo maybe later I can put up a shingle and advertise myself as a medium.

I might make some money for a change so I don't end up hitting the streets like an oversized stuffed animal.

You see, a human being can be as ugly as sin, but if he runs out of money he's worth just about as much as a discarded cuddle bear.

So next time you observe a Teddy Bear or a Stuffed Lobster, think of the suffering in the background of their lives and have some compassion. If this article in any way contributes to that, then I feel I have been a success. ■



Exhibit Three: A supernatural aura appears over the octopus, removes all its evil in an occult exorcism.

Mural to building on Jones and Golden Gate

"She has a vision of the neighborhood rising and she'll have volunteers collaborating during the work, carrying paint and things. It'll be fantastic."

The mural has been a burning idea of Zamora's since she moved into her one-story law office next door in 2001. In those days, as soon as graffiti appeared on the building's Jones Street wall, she and her husband dashed outside to scrub it off, scarcely before it dried. But the Jack Sen Benevolent Association, she said, had no interest in sharing the burden to keep up appearances.

A rusty, overhanging, porn movie sign got Zamora's attention, too. She thought it was dangerous

to walk under — though the Department of Building Inspection didn't agree, she admits. The slippery sub-basement cover on the sidewalk was another danger she brought to the owners' attention. It wasn't until a woman slipped and fell on it that the owners fixed it.

"And they eventually took the sign down," she said.

The mural was an idea she brought when she was chosen manager of the new CBD two years ago. By coincidence, she had met Walee Gon, an association owner who was interested in the CBD when it was forming. He liked her mural idea and delivered the association's approval.

Zamora floated the idea in committee. Soon the CBD board approved it.

Contracting with Caron likely won't cost the CBD a cent, Zamora said, because she applied for the Community Challenge grant, and it was awarded in early February.

The mural may be a removable face fixed to the building. That's being explored and would need owner approval. It definitely will have a protective coating.

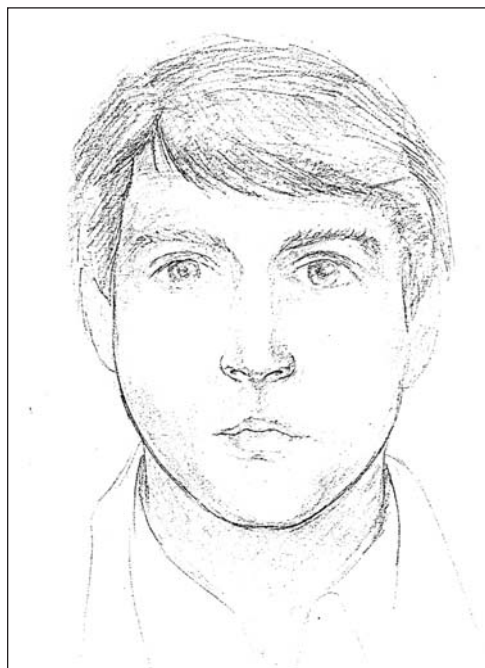
"Then graffiti washes right off within 10 hours," Zamora says. ■

—TOM CARTER

City raises reward in '84 Tenderloin slaying to \$100,000

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ine and possibly identify "foreign DNA" for which the inspectors can find a match. But results won't be in for two months or more. Pera was surprised at how well evidence in this case was preserved to guard against deterioration.



This police sketch is of a person who was seen in the building on O'Farrell Street about the time Mei Leung was murdered in 1984.

The police have an old sketch of a person of interest they'd like to locate in the Mei Leung case. He's not a suspect, Pera says, but he was seen in the building about the time of the slaying.

Right after the murder, a woman and her young son went into the basement perhaps to check on laundry and the boy noticed blood on the floor. The mother decided to go upstairs and report it. In the elevator, she said in a police interview, was a young white man fiddling with the control buttons

as if he didn't know how to use them. The sketch is of him.

"We have DNA from a lot of people, including hotel residents, but we couldn't find anyone still living in the hotel from 1984," Pera said.

The current apartment manager, Mina Seo, on the job about a year, told The Extra

she was aware of the case but no residents have ever mentioned it and no one that she knew of had lived there since 1984. The building is between the Sui Lai Thai restaurant and another apartment building and has undergone ownership changes and renovations since then.

A \$10,000 reward for information leading to a conviction in the Mei Leung case was offered early on. Pera went to the mayor's office in November and got the reward raised to \$100,000.

"It's worth a try," she said.

The city's unsolved murder cases go back to the turn of the 20th century. And Toomey and Pera, who worked together 10 years in homicide before getting the cold case assignment, are finding surprises.

Olav Brudvik was strolling near the Embarcadero at Harrison Street after a couple of drinks one night in 1944 and was robbed and beaten to death. More than 60 years later, his great-nephew, who was working on the family tree, called the cold case unit. He said he had the name of a suspect who might have killed his relative.

"We checked out the man's name," said Pera. "And he hadn't admitted it (the crime). But we found he had quite a rap sheet, lots of prior arrests for robbing and beating people up. We were 99% sure it was him but he had died. So we closed the case."

"People don't realize what an impact a murder has on a family. It probably lasts two or three generations. Bringing it to a close is great. But sometimes people are grateful that we are just giving it a look. It's a pleasure to deal with the people."

Toomey and Pera have about 50 cold cases on their desk in various stages — untapped, in lab work, awaiting court scheduling — with 20 now being actively pursued. They also brought 100 "warm" homicide cases with them.

Here are the active ones involving District 6:

- June Palmer was an attractive blonde, 31, a business type who had gotten into drugs

after arriving here from New York in the 1990s. She was arrested for petty theft here and in Millbrae. In June 1995, she was raped and strangled. Her body was dumped at 986 Howard St., an area where she was hanging out. The family called and the cold case unit began looking at it in February.

- Brandy Toms, a 45-year-old African American prostitute, in 1999 was found at 34 Sixth St., brutally beaten and repeatedly stabbed in her Seneca Hotel room 228. "She was a drug-using prostitute," Pera says, "and her life revolved around having or not having \$3 or so. People can even get killed for owing that much. But nobody deserves to die that way." Toms had no family but left a lot of DNA and broken bottles for the lab.

- Nancy Gridley, 24, was in San Francisco for a wedding, staying at the Rodeway Inn at Geary and Larkin streets. She checked in on Thursday, July 12, 1973, and was hoping to stay four days, if the inn had space on Sunday. But she disappeared on Friday. She showed up in the George Washington High School parking lot on 30th Avenue, sexually assaulted and strangled. The unit is investigating similar cases involving three other young women in the May to July period.

Toomey's audience at the police meeting didn't fail to recognize the sensational aspect of his work and he was asked if he had ever appeared on "America's Most Wanted" television show. Twice, he replied, and he was once subpoenaed in the Scott Peterson murder trial.

Toomey had worked on a case involving a missing young pregnant mother and her 5-year-old boy. Police found a pelvis floating in the bay, then went to the missing mother's family and got DNA samples from a hairbrush and matched the DNA to the pelvis. Toomey sent Fire Department divers down for the boy and the fetus but they were never found.

Peterson's lawyer tried to make the suspect in that case the same as the murderer of Peterson's 27-year-old wife, Laci, who also died pregnant. ■

TENDERLOINHEALTH a continuum of care

Outreach and Community Events March 2008

Health Promotion Forum

Topic: Fight For Your Rights!

Speaker: Steven Bruce, Executive Director, People with Disabilities Foundation

Date/Time: Tuesday, March 18, 12 pm - 2 pm

HIV Treatment Forum

Topic: Crystal Methamphetamine: Questions Answered

Speaker: Jay Fournier, Abbott Laboratories

Date/Time: Monday, March 17, 3 pm - 4 pm

Client Advisory Panel

Come talk with Tenderloin Health's Board Client Representative(s) and program managers about plans for Tenderloin Health. Also provide input on new services and how we can improve.

Date/Time: Wednesday, March 12, 11:30 am - 1 pm;

Wednesday, March 26, 11:30 am - 1 pm

Volunteer and Intern for Tenderloin Health

Orientation: Sunday, March 9, 12 pm - 6:30 pm

220 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor
lunch provided

You must register for volunteer trainings.
Stop in/call Emilie (415) 437-2900 ext. 234.

For a schedule of our current groups or for more information call 415.431.7476 or go to www.tenderloinhealth.org

One way to lick prostitution

WHEN is prostitution the answer? When nobody can answer the question.

"Does anybody know why there are one-way streets in the Tenderloin?" asked Northern Station police Capt. Croce Casciato. He stumped his audience of 80 residents attending the Alliance for a Better District 6 Safety Forum on Feb. 12.

Hearing no reply, Capt. Casciato began describing the street scene here in the early 1970s. As a Central Station cop, he patrolled the TL where there were lots of prostitutes. Johns in cars cruised both sides of two-way Turk Street, stopping for hookers who jumped into their cars and sped off looking for a dark place to have sex.

Making pinches snarled traffic and frustrated some drivers.

"When we arrested people we impounded their cars," Casciato said. "I did the towing to the garage at 255 Turk. We had a lot of community meetings about the problems and the only way to stop it was to make the streets one-way."

And that's why the Tenderloin has one-way streets. Casciato didn't, however, say that was why so many streets South of Market are one-way.

So what happened to the prostitutes? someone wanted to know.

"They went to the Western Addition." ■

—TOM CARTER

Tenderloin code enforcer moves on

DEPUTY City Attorney Neli Palma, who leaves her job as code enforcement overseer for the Tenderloin to join a private law firm specializing in public law, received commendations for her eight years of service here from the Alliance for a Better District 6 and the mayor's office at the Tenderloin police captain's meeting in February.

Before joining the city attorney's office, Palma served on the Rent Board, volunteered in the neighborhood as a tenant advocate, and was active with the North of Market Planning Committee and drafting the Tenderloin 2000 plan for neighborhood improvements.

Palma said as a deputy city attorney she was first assigned to the Sunset District, especially around the Parkside area. But she said she quickly grew tired of nearby St. Francis Wood residents complaining about their cars and longed for poverty issues. She was soon transferred to the TL.

Palma, a graduate of USF Law School who passed the California Bar in 1999, will remain in San Francisco. She said her greatest rewards were correcting housing code violations, then getting hugs from the tenants.

"I knocked on a lot of doors," she said with tears in her eyes. ■

—TOM CARTER



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FRANK TRANTHAM
'A memorable guy'

In the Faithful Fools' meditation room on Hyde Street, five Tenderloin health providers gathered Feb. 19 to remember a man who taught them to look beyond the obvious in their clients.

Frank Trantham had been homeless for many years when Abigail Kahn, outreach case manager for DPH's Homeless Outreach Team, met him at Hospitality House's shelter.

"I got him placed in a stabilization room at the Columbia Hotel while we tried to find him permanent housing," Kahn said. "His health problems were severe — he was an insulin-dependent diabetic, had been hospitalized and had three strokes before he died."

Kahn found Mr. Trantham dead in his Columbia room Jan. 24, only six months after he moved in. He was 44 years old.

Permanent housing hadn't been far off. Not long ago, Kahn took him to the Empress Hotel for an interview about becoming a resident there.

"He charmed everyone he met at the Empress with his jokes," Kahn said. "As we were leaving, he asked me, 'Do you think they liked me?' I said, 'Yes, they did.' Then he told me, 'This is the kind of place where I'd be glad to have my father visit me.'"

Mr. Trantham grew up in Louisiana and had stayed in touch with family members still living there, including his father.

Most of the patients that Barry Zevin sees as a doctor specializing in addiction medicine at the Tom Waddell Health Center have stopped communicating with their families, but not Mr. Trantham, Zevin said at the memorial.

"It didn't sound like things were always smooth between Frank and his family, but still, they were at the center of who he was and where he was. He talked about his father, a bandleader, and a nephew who was in the military service."

Zevin remembered Mr. Trantham as a man with a strong regional accent who gave most medical professionals "a run for their money" and who made his dislike for doctors clear the first time they met.

"But he told me that I compared favorably with the town doctor where he grew up, and that he did like him."

Zevin saw Mr. Trantham frequently, treating him not only for his many health problems but also for anxiety as he tried to figure out how he'd wound up where he was — "someplace where he was happy to be, but that also was a pretty bad place," Zevin said. "He was a stoic about his illness but fearful of medical care. And he lived in San Francisco like it was a small town; he knew lots of people and sold things on the street, like shoes, to make some money."

Gina Limon, his registered nurse, saw him daily and says that while he was cross with her sometimes, he always stood up for her, yelling at people who appeared to be disrespecting her. "It only took a week after I started caring for him to tell me I was a 'Frank-friendly' person," Limon said. "He was a memorable guy for everyone."

When Kahn and Jason Albertson, Homeless Outreach Team social worker, went to Mr. Trantham's room after he died, they found a set of golf clubs, golf shoes and candy-striped button-down shirts in his closet.

"That really taught me that things are not always what they seem," said Albertson. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

RUDOLPH PRICE
Sang with Patti Labelle

That popular Rudolph Price had a starry page in his past came as a surprise to a dozen of his friends who gathered Feb. 22 for his memorial at the Lyric Hotel.

"He played guitar and sang with Patti Labelle in his younger days and he had a good voice," said Steve Moriarty, an S.F. General Hospital high-risk caseworker.

"Oh, he was charming, but I didn't know he was almost famous," said one woman.

"I didn't know he was a musician," said a man who had known Mr. Price for two years.

The Philadelphia-born Labelle went on to fame and fortune as a singer and actress. Mr. Price's road was much different and he leaves no music behind, as far as Moriarty knows.

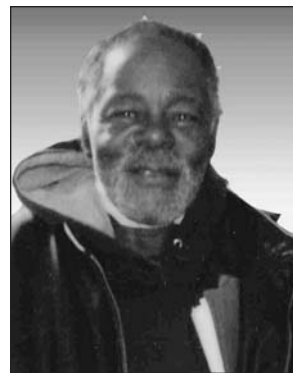
What had made Mr. Price a prince among his Lyric friends, though, was his sparkling personality and glittering smile, even as he fought kidney disease. They said Mr. Price was a "character," tooling down the sidewalk in his motorized maroon wheelchair, wearing his matching fuzzy hat, leaning to

one side like he was driving a car, playfully offering the ladies a ride in his "Cadillac."

Mr. Price lived in rough-and-tumble Baltimore projects and had two daughters by two wives before leaving on his own 30 years ago for the Bay Area music scene. He had nephews and nieces in Oakland.

But music didn't pan out for Mr. Price. He was homeless for eight years and living under the freeway when he came to S.F. General where Moriarty helped him get medical treatment, SSI and other benefits.

Mr. Price started kidney dialysis treatments three times a week and received a wheelchair. Moriarty got him into the Lyric Hotel in June where he immediately became popular.



"He was grateful for all the people who helped him along the way, too," Moriarty said in front of a table laden with bouquets, a few photos and candles. "Part of our goal for his recovery was to get a guitar in his hands. But his hands started freezing up a year ago from his medical condition."

Mr. Price was found dead in his second floor room on Feb. 10 during a room check. He was 63, Labelle's age. The medical examiner's office said the cause of death wouldn't be determined for a month.

"He was just a very nice man," said one man from the back. "He had a wonderful smile and treated everyone with respect."

"He was joyful, I loved the guy," said Gordon Grant, his case worker. "And he loved women. When any would come into a room — they could be 70 years old — he'd just light up. He didn't like to talk about his past, though, just surface talk."

The long hospital dialysis treatments made him very weak, Grant said. "Sometimes he wouldn't go. And when he did things that ruffled my feathers, I had to admonish him. But he was willing to approach change."

"He was like a big brother to me. His dream was to visit his daughters in Baltimore. But that didn't happen."

Joy Harvey, a senior case manager, had gotten a big frame for a small photo of Mr. Price. It was propped up on the table between the bouquets and written on it was "In loving memory, Rudolph Price, Friend, Neighbor, Wonderful Soul, You will be missed." His daughter Michelle, in Baltimore, couldn't attend but sent her picture inscribed with "Goodbye Daddy," which Moriarty had placed on the table.

A crew in the adjacent kitchen had fixed sandwiches for everyone.

"We try to make our goodbyes as nice as possible," Harvey said. ■

—TOM CARTER

HARVEY WHITLOCK
Investment banker

Harvey Whitlock was a former Wall Street investment banker. White-haired and maybe 5-foot-8 and 100 pounds, he was polite and never swore. He was sensitive and had a sense of humor, too. And he earned respect and affection at the Ambassador Hotel where he lived for nearly five years.

But Mr. Whitlock had his demons. They led him to drink and, in the last year of his life, drugs.

He was found Jan. 29 in his room on the sixth floor. He had been dead two days, social workers said. Cause of death was unknown. Mr. Whitlock was 60.

"He was very polite and easy to get along with, when he wasn't battling demons," said Cecil Baker at Mr. Whitlock's Feb. 4 memorial where a half dozen mourners gathered in the hotel's Listening Post room. Baker lived across the hall from Mr. Whitlock.

"I'd ask him about a stock — but I don't have any — and he'd say, 'Don't buy that shit, it's fantasy.' It'd make him mad."

"I worked with him 4½ years," said social worker Rachel Throm. "He was a nice guy."

"A gentle presence," someone said. "People were important to him."

But sometimes Mr. Whitlock wandered out at night and got beat up on the street.

"He'd end up with the most horrible black eyes," Baker said.

Baker talked to Mr. Whitlock several times a week and learned that in the last year he had turned to speed.

"It's amazing what we remember of him is all positive," Baker said. ■

—TOM CARTER

JAMES WILLIAMS
Cambridge Hotel desk clerk

James Williams, a former Maritime Museum employee, was a well-read Tenderloin intellectual who charmed people with his knowledge and inspired them to read and learn.

He was a desk clerk at the Cambridge Hotel for the past 17 years, until he got too sick to work. In his friendly way he bent people's ears coming and going through the lobby, about history and music and other subjects close to his heart. Some reverently called him Mr. Williams. Alabama-born, he referred to himself simply as "a Southern gentleman."

After a long battle with cancer, Mr. Williams died Jan. 12 at Kaiser Hospital. He was 65.

On Feb. 1, 40 mourners filled the Cambridge Hotel's community room to capacity for his memorial, spilling outside where a dozen stood in the lobby. The unusually large turnout was a tribute to Mr. Williams' kindness and impact on others, said the Rev. Glenda Hope, who conducted.

On a small easel next to her were a dozen photos showing him as a toddler and, in uniform, his dad, who had been killed in World War II, and boat sketches that Mr. Williams liked.

"I've been here 12½ years and I learned so much from him," said an older man.

"He was like a professor," said one woman.

"He loved IMAX 3-D movies and documentaries but only good ones," said longtime friend Walter Lilly who now lives at the Columbia Hotel. "He felt ripped off if they were inferior and dramatized like a Hollywood movie."

"When he found out I liked to read he'd give me three or four books a week!" another woman exclaimed, raising a laugh. "But I couldn't read that much."

The mourners recalled Mr. Williams' love of Southern food, his "calming ways" and many kindnesses: taking a resident out for a steak on her birthday and insisting she order the most expensive one; taking a friend during Fleet Week to see the Blue Angels and explaining aerodynamics; taking friends to Davies Symphony Hall to hear classical music, but not the modern stuff, which he hated.

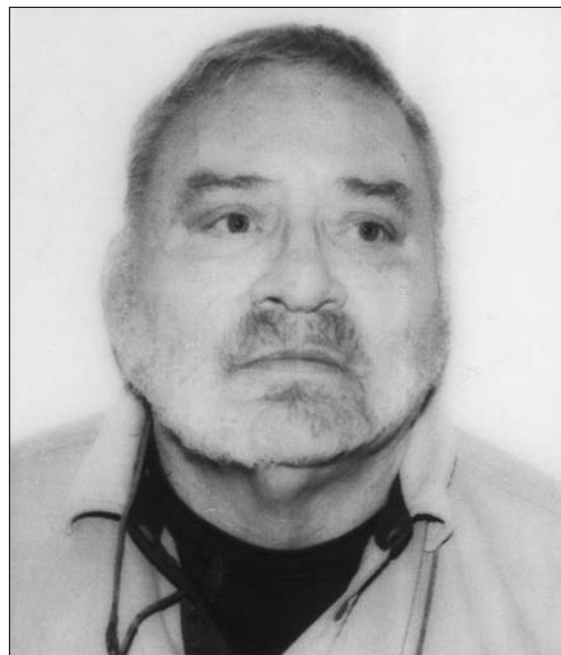
Mr. Williams' former wife, Janet Cydel of Larkspur, and their son, Michael, and daughter, Chandra, attended and talked with his friends after the memorial. She and Mr. Williams had met at Ohio State and came to California in the 1960s, hoping to get into UC Berkeley, his "fourth or fifth college." She got in; he went to San Francisco State. He never got a degree, she said.

Mr. Williams came from a large Alabama family, she said, and became "the only one" without a Southern accent. They were divorced after 10 years. He had "a lot of demons," she said, mainly alcohol.

He worked for the Maritime Museum in the 1970s. Once, when on the Balclutha deck, he jumped into the bay and saved a stranger who had fallen over the railing.

Mr. Williams beat a brain tumor in 1996 and stopped drinking. But his cancer battles continued until a more aggressive form put him back in the hospital in late December. He died there two weeks later. ■

—TOM CARTER



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Safety Network Community Leadership Awards Annual recognition of outstanding community leaders citywide working toward a safer San Francisco, Wed., Apr. 2, 6-8 p.m., State Building, 455 Golden Gate, auditorium. Childcare and refreshments. Nomination forms at www.safetynetwork.org Information: Dina Hilliard, 538-8100 x 204.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

Supportive Housing Network, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., location TBA. Contact: Kendra Fuller, 421-2926 x304.

Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco, 1st Wednesday of the month, noon, 201 Turk Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training, facilitate communication.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

CBHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month, 5:30-7:30 p.m., CBHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. Call: 255-3428. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

Health & Wellness Action Advocates, 1st Tuesday of the month, 5-7 p.m., Mental Health Association, 870 Market, Suite 928. Call: 421-2926 x306.

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of the month, Quaker Center, 65 Ninth St., noon-1:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home and community-based services, expanded eligibility for home care and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group, 870 Market, Suite 928. Call for dates and times: 421-2926 x306.

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 255-3474.

National Alliance for the Mentally III-S.F., 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Family Service Agency, 1010 Gough, 5th Fl. Call 905-6264. Family member group, open to consumers and the public.

SAFETY

Safety for Women in the Tenderloin, every 3rd Wednesday, Central City SRO Collaborative, 259 Hyde St., 4-6 p.m. Informal, friendly environment, refreshments, gender sensitive to LGBTQ community and sex workers. Discuss how to make Tenderloin SROs safer for women. Information: Leanne Edwards, volunteer campaign coordinator, 775-7110 x102.

North of Market NERT, bimonthly meeting. Call Lt. Erica Arteseros, S.F. Fire Department, 970-2022. Disaster preparedness training by the Fire Department.

SoMa Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location changes monthly. To receive monthly information by e-mail, contact Meital Amitai, 538-8100 x202 or mamitai@iisf.org.

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy. Call Susan Black, 345-7300. Neighborhood safety.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com, a districtwide improvement association.

Boeddeker Park cleanup, 3rd Saturday of the month, 9-noon, organized by the Friends of Boeddeker Park. To RSVP to work or for information, Call Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Central City Democrats, meets four times a year, 301 Eddy St. Community Room. Addresses District 6 residential and business concerns, voter education forums. Information: 339-VOTE (8683) or centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com.

Central Market Community Benefit District, board meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 989 Market St., 3rd Fl., 3 p.m. Information: 882-3088, <http://central-market.org>.

Community Leadership Alliance. CLA Community Advocacy Commission monthly meeting, City Hall, Room 034. Subcommittee meetings and informational forums held monthly at the Tenderloin Police Station Community Room. Information: David Villa-Lobos, admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. Plan park events, activi-

ties and improvements. Contact Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5 p.m. Board works to protect SoMa resources for children, youth, families and adults. Gene Friend Recreation Center, 270 Sixth St. Information: 538-8100 x202

North of Market Planning Coalition, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Call: 820-1412. Neighborhood planning.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Call Elaine Zamora for times and dates, 440-7570.

SoMa Leadership Council, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., The Arc, 1500 Howard St. at 11th. Emphasizes good planning and good government to maintain a diverse, vibrant, complete neighborhood. Contact: Jim Meko, 624-4309 or jim.meko@comcast.net.

South of Market Project Area Committee, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th. Health, Safety and Human Services Committee meets monthly on the first Tuesday after the first Monday, 1035 Folsom, noon. Information: 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police community room, 301 Eddy. Call at 358-3956 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and businesses sharing information and taking on neighborhood development issues.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

Mayor's Disability Council, 3rd Friday of the month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, Rm. 400. Call: 554-6789. Open to the public.

Senior Action Network, general meeting, second Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary's Cathedral. Monthly committee meetings, 965 Mission #700: Pedestrian Safety, third Wednesday, 10 a.m.; Senior Housing Action, third Wednesday, 1:30; Information: 546-1333 and www.senioractionnetwork.org.

SUPERVISORS' COMMITTEES

City Hall, Room 263

Budget and Finance Committee Daly, Dufty, Ammiano, Mirkarimi, Elsbernd, Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Land Use Committee Maxwell, Sandoval, McGoldrick, Monday, 1 p.m.

District 6 plays leading role in city's drug cases

Up to 70% of prosecutions originate in area, D.A.'s office tells Safety Forum

BY TOM CARTER

OF the 500-plus drug cases the district attorney's office prosecutes each year, up to 70% come from District 6, Sharon Woo, of the D.A.'s narcotics unit, told a Safety Forum audience.

Woo was one of nine panelists representing parts of the city's criminal justice system who were brought together by the Alliance for a Better District 6 to explain how their departments work. All complained that they are understaffed and all face budget cuts from the city's looming deficit. The Feb. 12 forum drew about 80 people.

Judge David Bellati, presiding judge of San Francisco Superior Court, told how fast the number of court cases is escalating. On Feb. 1, the backlog of 3,300 felony cases was up 16% from February 2007, he said. In the same month, misdemeanors totaled 3,024, up 12%.

Parole Officer Darrin Dill said his department's 80 officers each carries a caseload of about 200. Dill, the only bicycle-riding parole officer, goes into the streets and alleys of the TL and SoMa to find homeless probationers who aren't reporting in. He hooks them up with services to get them on their feet.

MORE CUTS COMING

"Oh, to get my caseload down to 50 or 75, that would be great," Dill said afterward. "I could do so much more and spend more time with each person. I saw 15 today.

"But now we're being asked for a cut in the department."

The statistics appeared grim against the backdrop of the city's \$233 million shortfall for the year starting July 1. With the 8% across-the-board department cuts that Mayor Newsom has requested, things will get worse before they get better. And the slice could go deeper. Newsom has asked departments to identify 5% more in contingency cuts.

Judge Bellati said many departments that work with the courts are also plagued with problems, making headway hopeless. Asked if he could do anything for the mired Superior Court, Bellati, who assigns 51 judges to their departments, gave an example.

He sent an experienced felony court judge to investigate, evaluate and recommend a solution to speed up the pace in misdemeanor courts. The recommendation was to send experienced felony court judges to work three of the four misdemeanor courts.

"The results were very good, too," Bellati said. "But do you know anything about cooking? It was like sending Emeril to man the salad bar."

The experienced judges dealt with cases faster, but of course left an "experience" hole in the felony courts where 697 trials are pending, compared with 421 a year ago.

FAR MORE CRIMINAL TRIALS THAN EVER

"There's no single answer to the backup — these are systemwide issues," Bellati said. He cited shortages in the police force and the district attorney's office, among other things.

"I can't just push a button and make them go away. There are things the court has no control over. Now, we're handling far more criminal trials at Civic Center than we've ever handled."

He needs more courtrooms, Bellati said, and he has asked the mayor for them. A brainstorming retreat is set for mid-month. He hoped that the voters would one day pass a bond issue to build a bigger Hall of Justice, but the public prefers "hospitals and schools" over that, he said.

The D.A.'s office has six trial attorneys that each handle 75 to 125 drug cases a year, Woo said, and of those "more than 500 cases," 60% to 70% come from District 6.

"When we decide what to take to a jury, we want to be smart," she said. "A suspect with prior convictions won't get probation — you're going to jail."

Residents, concerned about drug dealers returning to work the TL, asked who does go to jail.

A conviction for the first drug-selling arrest with no priors brings 30 days in jail at most, Woo said, plus probation and a stay-away order from the area where arrested, sometimes defined as the entire Tenderloin. And next time, the suspect can be routinely searched.

The second conviction means "about a year in jail," and the third sends a dealer to state prison for a year or more.

The D.A.'s office keeps stay-away books with pictures of the offenders, but the orders have a limited life. Once a dealer is out of prison and on parole, the stay-away orders aren't valid.

At the end of the night, most of the aired problems remained Gordian knots. Understaffing, not surprisingly, was the crux of nearly every one with no funding remedy in sight. But at least one problem got attention.

PLEA FROM LATINA MOMS

From the back of the room, Bobbi Lopez said Latina moms with children in the Tenderloin School on Turk Street feel disconnected from police. Lopez works with them through La Voz de La Ciudad Central, an outreach program of Tenderloin Housing Clinic.

Moms walking their kids to school are sexually harassed by homeless people hanging around the school, she said, and no police are around then. Additionally, some moms have experienced traumatic loss of young family members in gang-related killings. The police haven't followed up with them on the cases and the moms feel abandoned by the authorities, she said.

Capt. Croce Casciato of Northern Station, one of five captains representing the police districts connected to District 6, piped up.

"I'll come to the school," said Casciato. "Let's set a day and time. And I'll speak in Spanish." ■